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POEMS BY LEYLAND HUCKFIELD

ARCTIC CHALLENGE

We came to the edge of that grey desolate land
At mid of the afternoon,
And, low in a mist of frost that shimmered dead,
The great sun hung — white as a winter moon.

The oxen stood, blowing their clouds of steam,
Seeming of giant mold;
Huge as the bulls of Hannibal, mightily horned,
Swaying monstrous heads in the arctic cold.

Fur clad and crouching squat on the low-hung loads,
Uncouth and savagely grim,
Shaggy with hair and ice in the snow and rime,
We grouped like Dawn-Men there on the bulging rim.

Looming high on the edge of wastes unknown
Lost in a far sad sky,
The drift of the Ages had gathered us to that place
From shifting glacial glooms of a day gone by.

There was no breath of wind to wreathe the snows
In that lone bowl of dread,
Only the cold sun shone as though to lure
Us on, with treacherous light, to doom ahead.

And the great whips cracked, the uncouth curses rose,
The yokes seemed groaning pain —
Facing the ill of fate we heavily swung
Into the drifts of that forbidden plain.

TO ENGLISH POETS WHO HAVE SUNG OF
MALVERN HILLS

(PIERS PLOWMAN — JOHN MASEFIELD)

If you have wandered in bitter loneliness
Among the gorse and bracken, and have known
How thick and chill the winter clouds can press
About those old entrenchments, while the moan
Of sword-like wind throbs in the shrouded pass —

Then you have learned the Hills — and you have won
Vast twilight dreams that over-brood the soul —
And, treading amid the softness of grey rains,
Have, deathly silent, heard wet pebbles roll
From sandalled feet while a faint clash of chains
Came close in the folding darkness — and went on.

If you have lain lingering on a summer brow
When the far peaks of Wales loomed under flame
Of a great sunset, while a mighty glow
Possessed all heaven and the green slopes became
Rich with a glory of gold and wonder-still —

Then you have loved the Hills — and you shall be
Thrall to their glamor even in lonely lands
Beyond dim waters — ay, and the lonelier sea
Shall bear its image, where the Beacons stand
Above low morning mists that quiver until
Your eyes are blind with pain of memory.

If you have roamed in the dusk of tender days
When new-born lambs were bleating near and far,
And from Spring fragrance of the dew-wet ways
Have looked to the rich-gloomed summits, while a star
Lit love-gleams in shy eyes that met your own —

Then you are earth of the Hills — and shall remain
Bound to their tangled herbage till the Dark falls

That blackens sweet memory forever from the brain,
While the sad voice of an old passion calls
From twilight hollows that have lovelier grown.

Oh, and if you beneath a drifting moon
Have stood in thrusting wind that swept the skies,
While from the Brython camp boomed a low tune
Of bronzen clangor and woe of sacrifice,
Till the mad past of Malvern seemed to moan —

There on that girdled peak the gods have leaned
From weird cloud-shadows and laid their magic hands
Upon your forehead, white in the moon's beam,
And filled your soul with mystery of dead lands
Till all the night was as an ancient dream.

If you have been to the Hills as their own clay,
Bow to the olden gods in praise and pride,
And in warm glory of some Autumn day
Build me an altar on the Western side
And, when the slopes have darkened, raise a flame —

Then by that blaze upon the Hills — though Fate
Has laid me within an icy alien tomb
I shall be warmed, and with brave dreams await
My day of freedom beyond the ages' gloom —
Knowing the Hills and the gods have loved my name.

THE OLD LANE

The Old Lane that I dream of
Was set apart by God,
With cowslips in its mossy tracks
And daisies in the sod;

And there-to came the hawthorn
And purple-fruited briar,
And the black-stemmed plum that trembles
Above wild roses' fire —

And white and sea-blue violets
Crept to the cool damp mold,
And primroses and ladysmocks
And meadow-cups of gold:

And all the ethereal herbage
That lives by dew and rain
Stole softly with its fragrances
To people the Old Lane:

So young hearts wander helpless
When buds burst from the brown
And warmth comes to the bent grass
That storms have beaten down:

Here where Spring's love has lingered
For full two thousand years;
Couched in the petals and silvery
With April's magic tears.

Here, when the hawthorn burgeons
With wealth of white May-bloom,
And men and maids walk and dream
Late in the scented gloom:

Where nightingales with evening
Fling their wild hearts away,
Till the dusk is like sweet sorrow
To which lost maidens pray.

Summer, with richer glamor,
Surges in the Old Lane,
When the great hay-loads go brushing by
High on each lurching wain;

And Autumn breeds new splendor
Of wine-glow flame and gold,
And the pagan chant of 'Last Load Home' —
Brings back the days of old.

Oh, and when all is leafless
And the stripped briar hangs low,
And the earth rings hollow like a bridge
Where men pass to and fro —

Even then not all joy passes,
For bird and beast may find
Fruit of the thorn and comforting
Of shelter from the wind.

Legions of Rome have tramped it,
Brython, Saxon, and Dane —
For the Lane was an olden highway
When all was forest and plain:

Bugles have broken its dreaming,
Cannon have bruised its grass;
And the fires of camps have flickered and glowed
And passed, as red clouds pass.

Now, only the lithe brown gypsies
That lonely ways beguile,
Roll in with their painted caravans
To rest them for awhile —

But they go — when the dusk is haunted
By feet on the dewy sod —
For the Lane was made that Love might here
Walk in the peace of God.

THORWALDSTONE

Behold, I clung to the Abbey door
While the great stars burned;
But never, they said, and nevermore
Might the key be turned:
They bade me begone, for the mark I bore, —
Oh, bitterly,
They bade me begone to the wind-threshed moor
And the woe-fraught sea.

Now comes the morn with a burden of wrath
From a sunless pall;
By the shore and the wold there winds no path
And the black crows call,
Baffled and blown by the sea-thrust wind
They beat and cry
Like dragged monks who have darkly sinned —
Even as I.

Oh, the wool of the kid is on my gown;
The tender beast
That I would have hid till the sun went down
From the Abbot's feast:
Oh, it was a grievous sin indeed,
But I loved it so,
In those walls where body and book and creed
Were cold as snow.

And the lean grey acolyte, Augustine,
Drew it away,
And he passed me a blade that was cruelly keen
And bade me slay —
And I was a herdsman again, and apart
With a grey wolf lean,
When I leapt and the curved blade bit to the heart
Of Augustine.

Now I will seek me the Christ-hung cross
Of Thorwaldstone;
In its wilderness tangle of bramble and moss
Where the black yews moan;
Nor love of the four-foot things that play
By Thorwald's tomb
Ever again to my breast shall stray
For my soul's doom.

HAWTHORN DUSK

I love the hawthorn hedges
Because they bent above me
When I walked in the twilight
With one who lived to love me.

The blossoms drifted on us
From heavy branches blowing;
The changing glooms were holy
And sweet beyond all knowing.

And we were shy and tender,
Through mists and fragrance straying
With hearts like folded flowers —
For this was our first Maying.

Our feet pressed golden mosses
Beneath the thicket shadows,
And violets were blooming
Betwixt the lanes and meadows —

And there, with dew-wet lashes,
Our first kiss stole between us,
And we went homeward, blushing
Because the stars had seen us.

I SAW THE OLD FLAGS FLY —

I saw the old flags fly
And the old legions pass,
With scarlet trappery
And flash of burnished brass;
By gloom of purple seas,
Where white dream-cities stand,
To glories resurrectional
In the rare Persian land.

Came olden battle clangor,
Down-crashing of great brands,
The flaming sweep of hands-breadth steel
Heaved high in mighty hands;
And surge of golden standards
Against a sunset sky
Where, marching to the world's black rim,
The warriors went by.

And from beneath the darkness
I heard faint echoes come,
Till all the throbbing pulse of war
Seemed like a far-off drum;
A distant, half-imagined sound
To which the heart beat on
In mimic tones of steadfastness
When pomp and power had gone.

And then came sweeter dawns
On meadows richly grassed,
On valley fields and upland paths
Where happy people passed;
On misty seas where gay-hued sails
Curved out to meet the day,
While color flooded walls and towers
By cape and land-locked bay.

And came there softer splendor
And balm of better things;
Hope that is holden to the grave
And high imaginings;
Such love as sweetens sorrow,
Such peace as angels know,
That gentleness with might of thew
Might seed itself and grow.

Oh, Earth knew more of beauty
And mortals more of bliss
In my bright vision of an age
That shall succeed to this,
When feet of unknown races
Shall tread our cities down
To dust of desert places —
Where-on our dust is blown.

DOOMED SHIPS

Here is the end of the deep-sea trails,
Storm and sun and battle thunder;
Nights of languor, roaring gales,
Barren capes and isles of wonder —
Down along the paths of plunder
Where our mighty birth began,
When the blood-splashed buccaneers
Sailed the bright Caribbean.

Out and down and over the Line,
South to the ocean wildernesses
Where the spume-spray whirls and presses
Like green froth of poisoned wine:
There where a phantom sail will shine
As long as sea-born eyes can follow,
Where, over ridge and howling hollow
Magellan cleaves an unknown brine.

In the track of gilded galleons
Surging up for Panama,
With all the Isthmus smoking-raw
In the wake of Morgan's hellions —
Up the Coast as far as Behring,
Westward to the island bays;
Purple seas for man's forth-faring,
Magic nights and golden days.

Monster turrets swaying and soaring
In the grip of hurricanes;
Engine pulse and clanking chains,
And decks swept bare by heaven's pouring:
In evil seas without a mooring
Underneath the death-wrack's dread,
Boring ever, grimly boring,
Through the frightful wastes ahead.

Now they lie in stagnant waters,
Stripped of glory and affright,
These that cleft the smoke of slaughters
When flame-horrors lit the night:
Red with rust or bleaching white,
Dead, as is Leviathan —
God! what tragedy of might
Fills the bitter brain of Man.

HO! FOR THE THEWS OF VULCAN —

Ho! for the thews of Vulcan, and bellows
Tanned of Leviathan's emerald hide,
Where cliffs of gold in a crescent of splendor
Slope them down to the purple tide.

A magic forge and a droning anvil
Dragged from the depths of a sea-drowned town,
And ponderous hammers, mightily wielded,
That clamored doom as the realms went down.

Then would I make me a cavernous smithy,
Black with the storm-wrack of blast-driven flame,
Hollowly dinned with a clangor of thunder
And purple be-dripped in the fire-litten glame.

There would I weld me great patterns of brightness,
Massively beaten and splendidly true,
Rich with a song of mad sorrow and glory
That hate of the ages might never undo.

Smiting with arms like the pillars of Baran,
Flooring the caverns with splendor of gold;
A-sweat in the roar and the flame never-ending
I would outdo me the wonders of old.

‘THE SEA IS OUR ANCESTRAL TOMB — ’

The Sea is our ancestral tomb
For all its weight of water stands
Upon vast depths whose dreadful gloom
Holds down the dead forgotten lands.

There, far beneath the thunderous wave,
The giant sea-worms slowly creep
And suck their fullness from that grave
Where ancient glories sank to sleep.

There lies, beyond all secrecy
Embowelled by the caves of Earth,
The grim mysterious way that we
Trod bloodily to fate of birth:

Thence-rising come the shades that fall
Upon our souls and bulge our veins
With lure of ocean — though the call
Is as chill drift of Winter rains:

And those high utter realms of stone,
Where flame-eyed eagles veer and glide,
Shiver, when storms up-bear a moan
Of cold death-hunger from the tide.

There was our womb — and there we must
Creep backward as the ages crawl,
While a white bitterness of dust
Stealthily deepens over all:

And the Sad Fate that reared us knows
What fouler things we yet may be
When, from the fast-enfolding snows,
Man seeks black refuge of the Sea.

TOWARDS GETHSEMANE

Have you seen Christ? He passed me yesterday
In the March twilight, weary and sad-eyed;
Upon His beard was salt of Galilee
And the dark blood was dripping from His side.

Have you seen Christ? He passed me yesterday —
He passed into the gathering dark, towards Gethsemane,
He turned His feet to Paris, walking through the spray,
And His garments they are heavy with salt of the sea.

He will come to Paris — and it is all foretold —
Beneath a snowy banner with a crimson stain,
And it shall be as once before in the days of old
The Pharisees and Sadducees shall murder Christ
again —
The Priests and Legislators shall murder Christ again.

But the First and Second Comings shall not have been
in vain.

For the multitudes have seen Him and have claimed Him
for their own,
They have known Him in His misery and kissed His
bloody feet,
They have followed in His vision where the battle blasts
were blown,
They have claimed Him in the carnage of the barricaded
street;

Where the ikons lie in fragments and the wolves of
hunger prowl,
Where heavy faces stare at heaven and growling voices
pray,

Christ has passed — a Wonder-Glow for souls that knew
no Soul
And His pity and His peace shall brush the webs of hate
away.

And He will purge His Temple as He did in days of old,
For all things will be as they were before the fatal Tree,
And His sorrows shall be heavy and His body shall be
sold,
And deeper, darker than the First be This Gethsemane.

CAROL AND THE CHINKY BOY —

Ting — ting — tinkle — ting —
Drowsily I hear them ring —
The Chinky Boy upon my table
Smiles as hard as he is able,
To hear the tinkling temple bells:

Cling — clang — ting — tang,
Don't you see the peacocks flutter
Where the white plum blossoms fall?
Don't you hear the beggars mutter
Prayers beside the Tartar Wall?
See the gaudy lanterns swing —
Ting — ting — ting — ting
The sky is full of golden kites
And pigeons on the wing.

Here comes a mandarin
All ablaze with red and gold,
Next come his fifty wives —
And he so sleepy, fat and old —
You wonder how it was he came
Of wives to have so many,
When he would surely go to sleep
In making love to any.

Ting — tang — ting — tang
In the olden time they rang
High above the battle clangor —
That was when the yak-tail banner
Stains of victory bore;
When the voice of Ghenghis Khan
Bellowing like a gale,
Driving on each Tartar clan
Roared above the crash of mail
Where red blades bit and tore.

Ting — ting — ting — ting
Yellow humming-birds take wing
And pink peach blossoms dance along
On winds that sing a silver song,
And golden bees about us boom
And gather gold of lily bloom —
And Spring and song are in the air,
And temple bells are everywhere.

Ting — tinkle — tinkle — ting
Over uplands journey we,
Until, beyond the quaint-roofed town
We catch a glimpse of purple sea —
Golden junks with lateen sails
Rubbing wharves of golden umber
And silks and satins piled in bales
And lacquered boxes without number.

But — tinkle — ting — the Chinky Boy
Is whispering to me
Of islands far beyond the sun
That stud a golden sea;
Where I may be a golden queen
And sit a golden throne
And Chinky Boy and I and joy
May live there all alone —

But — ting — ting — tinkle — ting,
The twilight hour is grey;
Temple bells and golden sails
Are drifting fast away —
And light comes slowly up the stair
And through my bedroom door
And — then — I see that Chinky Boy
Has tumbled on the floor.

THROUGH OMBERSLEY

As I rode down through Ombersley
At nine o' night and summer o' the year,
I was happy as a lord could be
With half-a-gallon of the bright brown beer.

Oh, the Flanders mare had a silver mane
And her tail was silken and fair as the moon;
And her back was broad as a loaded wain
And her hoofs clumped out a tune.

As we went down through Ombersley
The dusk was heavy with a scent of bloom —
Roses and stocks and rosemary
Came floating from the hedge-row gloom.

There were diamond casements and window-glow
And strumming of a mandolin,
And a song was throbbing that could only flow
From the golden throat of sin.

As I rode out of Ombersley,
With the broad white Worcester road to tread,
The moon was rising to the left of me
Like a wine-warmed abbot's shaven head:

And the mare clumped on, and I held on,
All merry and mad and as loud as three,
Till far in the dark behind us shone
The window lights of Ombersley.

WITH THE WINDS OF HEAVEN

My soul has blown with the winds of heaven,
I have tasted of dawn and night;
I have bruised my breast on Hills of the Blest
In a god-like mad delight:

My golden sails have gathered the gales
From vast uncharted seas,
And my ivory prow has cloven the glow
Of mightier stars than these.

And the mountains that stand in that far land
Where the gods' last forges glare
Have felt my tread though shadows of dread
Surged in the steaming air:

And the capes of day that float and sway
When the twilight wine-glow swims —
I have sailed their maze through rainbow haze
To a sound of Pagan hymns.

My mast has locked with the crescent's horn
Till the ocean tore us free;
And the trough of the waves laid bare old graves
And tossed the skulls at me.

And never by moon, and never by star,
Nor under the glare-eyed sun,
Have I turned my prow from the hurricane blow
Of a race I dared not run:

And forever I bide with the untamed tide,
Be it fair or foul prevails —
My soul has blown with the winds of heaven
That fill the golden sails.

RIDING THE RODS

We saw the brakeman's lantern sway,
We heard the echoing 'All aboard —'
And with bristling hair and chattering teeth
We boarded the 'Flier' from underneath,
With the brake-rods quivering,
And as we felt them curve and spring
We gave ourselves to the Lord.

A grinding jerk, a rush of air,
Steel above and steel below;
The clanking steel was everywhere,
Jarring out its devil-din;
And we were rocking to and fro,
Rocking to an endless roar
Above a frightful sliding floor
That seemed to curl and spin.

Oh, creatures in the grip of Doom,
You have no woes to tell;
We, for our sin, were riding in
The very dust of Hell:
We heard the black-ribbed bridges boom,
We saw far glints beneath the gloom
Where moonlit rivers ran,
And we clutched the bars that parted Death
From our mad caravan.

Our brains were bruised, our bodies sore,
Our nerves were bloody, crawling things;
A living mass of writhing strings
At which new terrors tore;
And we called upon the name of God
Awhile we gripped each rusty rod
For the lives our mothers bore.

On either side the sweeping glow
Was full of glitterings;
It seemed the very earth must go
Through space on swifter wings;
And with each spurt the grit and dirt
Flew up from sand and shale
To sear our stubbly visages
Like meteoric hail.

We rode between the jaws of Death
From nine o'clock till ten,
And, since that night of din and fright,
We have been better men:
And there's no doubt the Devil took
His place as engineer,
And things of evil flew before
To keep the road-bed clear;
And in the rear a brakeman-fiend
Danced on the red caboose —
Ah, it was true — so well we knew
All Hell was breaking loose.

“COME LET US WANDER, BROTHER FOOLS — ’

Come let us wander, Brother Fools,
Before our hair is far-gone grey;
Fling all our craftsman tools away
And hest it out of the workshop door;
Perhaps we may come back some day —
Or find some better place to stay
Where we may wassail evermore.

Trudge along — trudge along —
We'll kill the night with a mad old song,
And the wavering moon will sway her head
From the moor to the lotus-lea —
Will sway her head till she goes to bed
In silver sheets of the sea.

And the feet may drag but the Moon's a wag
Who loves all wanderers so
She takes a tag of each fluttering rag
Till the wind-whipt tatters glow;
And the teeth'll gleam and the eyes shine
And the blood be Burgundy —
But — love be wed — she may go to bed
Ere ever to bed go we.

Trudge along — tramp and trudge —
And none of ye stray too far;
There's light in the grass wherever we pass
But a glow-worm ain't a star —
So, sing and wander, Brother Fools,
Though the sign-posts all are wrong —
But — curse the time that I took to rhyme,
For I carry my tools along.

THE MARCH IS ON —

The march is on — the march is on —
And I, as ever, shall go alone —
As in life I went alone —
Into the surge of spectral shapes
Amid the ruffle of ghostly feet
That the living only see when sweet
Summer grasses are blown.

No sound may touch the living ear —
But ancient horns and battle-drums
Blare and thunder and go by —
The march is on — the march is on —
Great voices beat — old standards fly —
And grim barbaric bulls of men
Who roared the doom of Babylon
Tread mightily to a fierce chant
That rises to a molten sun.

Now all the flame of pageantry
That in vast cities flared and shone
All Ind and rainbow-clad Cathay
Trample and pass, while banners sway
When the battle-blare is gone.

And the pomp of Rome comes past —
The march is on — the march is on —
Purple and gold and trumpet blast
All along the Appian Way,
In the time of Christ, on an olden day,
When a dreadful thing was done.

Jewelled helms and crested helms
The Northern knights are pouring down,

Heavily sworded, mighty limbed,
They ride upon Jerusalem —
Through desert lands where swords are sown
Thick as the sands that harass them.

The march is on — the march is on —
The gilded fripperies of Spain
Go past as in a silver rain,
Bright and misty to look upon —
And there go old Noll Cromwell's men
Tramping solidly and sure
Beside the gay-plumed Cavaliers,
And women's eyes, once drowned in tears,
Laugh as they hear a Roundhead hymn
Mingling with a drinking song.

The march is on — the march is on —
The vast procession drags and thins —
Oh, God — or gods — whatever begins
Within this hour — whatever ends —
I, who have sought no earthly friends
Step out, grim-eyed, with head held high —
Ah, ancient scythesman, here am I —
The march is on — the march is on.

LEYLAND HUCKFIELD: A FRIEND'S RECORD

By JOHN T. FREDERICK

Leyland Huckfield's first contribution to *THE MIDLAND* appeared in the issue for February, 1918. From a few months before that time until his death in May, 1923, we were in more or less constant correspondence, not only in regard to his poetry but touching many other matters of mutual interest; and while we never met, I came to count him as an intimate friend. I find it impossible to write of him either extensively or formally, and can offer to the readers of his poems only this brief record of impressions, and of biographical information drawn in part from his letters and in part made available through the kindness of Mrs. Huckfield.

Leyland Huckfield was born June 3, 1882, at Hillfurze, a small hamlet in the English Midlands about twenty miles from Shakespeare's birthplace. His father was well known locally as a horticulturist, especially as the originator of new varieties of plums and other fruits. He is still living at the age of eighty-two at Moor, near Pershore, Worcestershire. The mother, Elizabeth Leyland, belonged to an old family of which the historian and antiquarian Leyland was one of the distinguished members. The poet had four brothers and one sister. The family was very poor, but what money could be spared was spent for cheap editions of good books, which were read in the evenings with the whole family gathered around the huge fireplace.

Leyland (christened Benjamin) attended the village school, but was distinguished there chiefly for his shyness. Later he learned the craft of gardening under the direction of William Crump at Madresfield Gardens; and he continued to work as a gardener in the vicinity of his birthplace for several years.

In 1906 he emigrated to Canada, soon after the death

of his mother. There followed two years of which I know little except through occasional references in his letters and through the vivid revelation of such poems as "The Ford at Saskatoon" and "Arctic Challenge". Without friends or resources in Canada, he turned to day labor as a means of livelihood, and worked in lumber camps and railroad construction gangs. In 1909 he crossed the boundary into Minnesota, and finally reached the Twin Cities — almost without funds, unacquainted in the cities, and ill.

While he was in a Minneapolis hospital a fortunate circumstance brought him acquaintance with Professor N. H. Winchell, the state geologist of Minnesota. I am told that it was a common interest in anthropology which drew these men together, in a way so profoundly important for the poet. Through his new friend, Huckfield found opportunity to use his early training in horticulture. A real English gardener of skill and intelligence was a rare find in Minnesota, and he was employed successively on several large estates near Minneapolis. In 1916 he went to Rochester, Minnesota, as head gardener for Dr. W. J. Mayo, and he continued in this position until his death.

Huckfield had begun the writing of poetry before he left England, and some of his earlier verses had been published in an English newspaper, *The Worcester Herald*. In 1911 he issued privately a collection of his work ranging back from that year to 1899, under the title "A Legend of the Rose and Other Poems". In 1919 he wrote me that he had destroyed as many copies of this book as he could lay hands on; and it is true that the title poem and most of the others in this volume show singularly little indication of his later ability. A careful study of the poems in chronological order, however, reveals a definite increase in power and originality of phrase, as well as in mastery of rhythm; and some of the latest poems in this collection, such as "The Gallant's Song"

(October, 1908) and "The Pagan" (February, 1911), have not a little of the flavor of his later work.

In 1915 Leyland Huckfield married Flora May Cable, daughter of Dr. George A. Cable of Minneapolis. In the same year he received his first encouragement from the American literary world, through the acceptance by Miss Monroe and publication in *Poetry* of "Haunted Reaping" and "The Muse in Church". He continued to write steadily until his death. But he was a rigid critic of his own poems, destroying much of what he wrote; and he made little consistent effort to interest editors in his work. When in 1922 he collected what he considered his forty best poems for the volume "Rough Trails and Silver Meadows" (The Midland Press, 1922), he included poems which had appeared in *The Trimmed Lamp*; *Youth, a Magazine of Verse*; *Poetry*; *Contemporary Verse*; and *THE MIDLAND*. He had been recognized with especial friendliness by Charles Wharton Stork, editor of *Contemporary Verse*, and by Vincent Starrett, editor of *The Wave*; and from both of these men he received much generous and wholehearted encouragement.

His health had been unsatisfactory for some years, and in the summer of 1922 it was suddenly discovered that the cause of the trouble was a cancer of the stomach. All that medical science could do for him was done, and for a time it seemed that a cure had been effected. But this hope proved to be false, and after weeks of suffering he died May 19, 1923.

Leyland Huckfield faced death without complaint or fear. His last letters to his friends were like all those that had preceded them — full of generous good will, and unclouded by bitterness or despair. In the last weeks he became too weak to write, but he remained to the end thoughtful of others rather than of himself, unbroken by what he suffered and undismayed by what he awaited. His was not merely a stoical endurance of his fate, but an unreserved acceptance which seems to me triumphant.

The reader of his "last poems", some of which were completed only a few weeks before his death, will find the poet turning often in them as in "Rough Trails and Silver Meadows" to the England of his boyhood and young manhood. He was most delicately responsive both to the varied beauty of the English scene — village, orchard, field, and hills — and to the emotional and historic background of his native land. In such poems as "Last Load Home", "The Laborer in the Mists", and "The Land of Plums", from "Rough Trails and Silver Meadows", and in the noble "To English Poets who have Sung of Malvern Hills", the reader finds the English scene, the English horticultural life which Huckfield knew, and the historic England of the thousands of past years all woven into a single fabric of satisfying beauty.

The same sureness and fullness of response characterizes Huckfield's poems of the new world. It seemed to him, as it does to me, that the occupation of the central plain of North America by the white race is the most dramatic event in human history. And his pick-and-shovel share in this tremendous process, without destroying his sense of perspective, his grasp of the general significance of his subject, enabled him to write of it in such poems as "The Ford at Saskatoon" and "Riding West" with a vividness and an immediacy unequalled in contemporary American poems with similar themes.

Throughout his life Huckfield read very widely and very intelligently. His interests included the social sciences, history, and economics, as well as poetry. He had the contempt of the genuinely self-educated man for the average American college graduate, with his unconsidered assumption that four years' physical presence at a college or university constitutes a claim to the possession of culture. His independent intellectual development, through careful reading and varied and significant experience, gave him a surer sense of social values than most of us possess. He was a zealous and uncompro-

missing student of men, of himself as well as others. He loved humanity passionately and eagerly, and hated with equal passion the hypocrisy, selfishness, and intolerance which distort human lives.

To many readers Huckfield's poetry will be most endeared by its expression of his love for the living non-human world of his gardens and the fields. Such poems as "To a Parakeet" and "Birds That Cleave the Shadows" are free from the suggestion of false sentiment, but simple and genuine and living with his warm love for flower and bird and beast. It was perhaps our common interest in gardening and fruitgrowing that made me feel Huckfield's friendship most keenly. When Mrs. Frederick and I went to Michigan in 1918 to make a home in the cut-over country, he sent us seeds of hollyhocks and balsams to plant in our new garden. And it is because of the help of his skilled directions for planting, given in detail after we had described the conditions, that the first fruit trees we planted on the new land are thriving and already have borne fruit. In his own gardening Huckfield never spared himself the hardest manual labor—he would never ask a helper to do what he would not or could not do himself. He loved the soil and the growth of plants, and was as eager in his creation of beauty in his gardens as in his poems.

Is it this contact with the earth and this knowledge of labor that most of our poets lack, or simply bigness of soul? As I read more and more widely in contemporary poetry, I feel more keenly how rare are the vitality and spontaneity, the freedom from petty vanity and affectation, the downright honesty which every reader will find in Huckfield's work. To these cardinal virtues he added a rare intelligence, matured by widely varied experience and by intense reflection; and an emotional response to the earth and to human life at once most delicate and most powerful. He loved words, and the great rhythms of English verse; and in his hands words and rhythms

alike were neither conventions nor experiments, but the sure intuitions of a master.

Leyland Huckfield was my friend, and it may be that I cannot surely estimate the merit of his work. To me it is and will be significant and precious. I believe that others will find it so, and that it will not be forgotten. But whether in this belief I am right or I am wrong, I know these things of him: he gave himself without stint to the tasks that were his to do. He created beautiful things with his hands and with his mind. He lived generously and died bravely. I do not find that more can be said with truth of any man.

VOYAGE

(For Leyland Huckfield)

By VINCENT STARRETT

I do not know what death may bring
To compensate or woo me;
What melodies the winds will sing
That blow their cleanness through me;
What unimagined shores may rise
Beyond the gusty deep,
When I shall sail with eager eyes
Across the tides of sleep.

But whether there shall gleam a light
Across the waters stormy,
Somewhere beyond the crouching night
You wait, who went before me;
And I shall speed with bellied sail
By winds of blackness blown,
Alert to catch your eager hail,
Who found the way alone.

END OF VOLUME IX